

## LIBERTY IN EDUCATION.

by Charlotte M. Mason.

*2. begin my paper with a quote for Prof. Foerster of Munich. He says*

"Human nature contains such remarkable contrasts that the freedom of one part is bound up with the subjection of another...The root error of many modern tendencies is the confusion of true personal freedom with mere individual licence...The disciples of the 'new education' begin with quite a correct idea - namely, that the compulsory forcing of children into a mould leaves their personality undeveloped, & even injuriously affects it. They do not perceive that the laxity of their own methods is even more dangerous..... It is a revelation of the most deplorable superficiality to suppose that the elimination of obedience & restraint sets the individual free for higher development." (Professor Foerster, of Munich)\*

One of the results of the inquiring mind which has awakened in the world is, that we are not content to use terms without some notion as to their meaning. As for what is implied in Education, we have all tried to crack that hard nut, & some of us think we have found the kernel; anyway, it is not education, but liberty in education, a complex idea, that concerns us to-day.

It is the fashion to think that liberty means a relaxation or abandonment of the half-military discipline that ~~that~~ is customary in schools. Quite little children should no doubt be pretty free to come & go, sit or stand, but every nurse knows that she must train children to 'sit nicely' for short periods, because the

\* quoted from Rudolfucken His Philosophy of Education by Heinrich Benth

the body is an unruly creature to be trained only by the discipline of habit, &-

"If he does such things at five what will he do at fifty?" which is absurd but is true, all the same, for the ungainly person of fifty was probably an undisciplined <sup>child</sup> of five. Discipline, drill, are wholesome for boys as well as convenient for schoolmasters. We aim at imparting the ease, the final liberty, which comes of habits of self-control & <sup>we</sup> ~~so~~ cannot forego discipline in the schoolroom. Indeed, when we observe the fine deportment of the men where military service is universal we are inclined to think that the State should give physical training to all its youth, however free these ~~are~~ are left to render service or refuse it.

But, 'Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage'; <sup>we</sup> Sir Walter Raleigh <sup>was</sup> is not the only <sup>man</sup> ~~man~~ who ranged the world ~~the~~ while <sup>his</sup> ~~this~~ body <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ confined. Undue confinement is unendurable we know, but discipline is needful; it rests with the Schoolmaster to find the golden mean, & short 'periods' with intervals for gymnastic exercises, is the common solution. Boys & girls must stretch their legs now & then to limber their muscles & quicken their blood without taking much thought about liberty.

For liberty is of the spirit, -

"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free

And all are slaves besides," -

a fact which is brought home to us every day when we notice how 'limited' such an one is, when we fret under our own limitations.

The keys of the Kingdom are indeed in the hands of teachers, whose part is to send forth scholars bearing the bold device, - 'My mind to me a kingdom is.'

This may be possible we think for the brilliant, but what about the average & the dull boys & girls? For them, too, their mind, such as it is, should afford a kingdom, such as it is, for all kingdoms are not equal, but everyone has his own domain & therein finds his resources. That education fails in putting men into their proper inheritance, restaurant life, tango, teas, an unlimited flow of 'gate money', irrational strikes, suicidal practices & other such symptoms testify.

Now, liberty is not a pagan divinity, a go-as-you-please Goddess. She who is known by a careless ~~\*\*\*easily\*\*\*turned\*\*\*course\*\*\*~~ fling of the limbs, a bold & roving eye, a casual & easily-turned course, is not Liberty but License, & these are two that cannot dwell together. Rule is a component part of Liberty; rule from without, leading up to rule from within. Therefore, education must afford discipline & regulated emancipation, the freeing of the Scholar from imposed rule in proportion as he shews himself able to rule himself; which is not the same thing as, when he is old enough, <sup>saying</sup> quite a young child <sup>for</sup>

to rule himself



child may deserve the emancipation which makes him over to his  
his own government. The Master says, 'I trust you' to do  
 this & this; & the thing is well done; but still better is it  
 when the trust is taken for granted & master & scholars work  
 under a common sense of obligation. We must remember that  
 the principles of Docility & Authority are implanted in human  
 nature. Every child has that in him which should fit him  
 to rule his own household when the time comes, & that,  
 also, which makes subjection to rule / a satisfaction. //

We know how servants, shopkeepers, soldiers, take a pride in  
 receiving their "Orders", as indeed do we all, ~~& we sometimes~~  
~~make the grave error of 'voluntary subjection' to self-~~  
~~constituted authorities.~~ Hence the strength of all manner ~~of~~  
 of Societies, Leagues, Unions,, even <sup>of those whose</sup> ~~when their~~ influence is  
 disastrous.

There cannot be liberty, - but only anarchy, - without rule; and, -  
 "He is the freeman whom the truth makes free: <sup>"At this point,</sup> We are all  
 like 'jesting Pilate', we want to know, What is truth? And  
 we are told on the one hand that certain religious dog-  
 mas, on the other, that certain demonstrable scientific data,  
 are - the truth."

'God, who art mind' - apostrophizes Browning, & someday we

shall realize that all knowledge of good is inspiration,  
from God whose mind,  
 revelation (whether it be the poet's lovely line, the painter's  
 vision, the astronomer's guess about sun-spots, the evolution  
 of history, or <sup>concerning</sup> the direct revelation of God.

If a child is to be made free by the truth,  
 & 'the truth' is synonymous with the whole range of know-  
 ledge, without distinction as to human & Divine, for all  
 knowledge is Divine, we begin to see the measure of liberty  
 which is due to ~~him~~ him. He must go forth freed from  
 the intolerable bondage of fallacies, able to arrive for him-  
 self at a true statement of the cases that come before him.

Education that confuses ~~the~~ the issues of life & lets a man  
 believe himself free to think what he pleases, <sup>7</sup> without per-  
 ceiving that ~~our~~ thoughts must be controlled by self-exist-  
 ing axioms as certain as ~~those~~ of Euclid, sends him out a  
 candidate for bondage, a ~~ready~~ ready slave to the first specious  
 theory that comes his way. <sup>must</sup> I <sup>cannot</sup> <sup>specialize</sup> specialize, because  
 almost every burning question of the hour assumes a fallacy, &  
 to examine these seriatim would lead us far from our partic-  
 ular purpose. But let us realize that truth, that is, let  
 us say, right knowing & clear thinking, <sup>as a sense of the</sup> ~~proportion~~  
proportion of things, is that which gives liberty in education



It follows that truth is concerned with ideas, we must see ~~that~~ that children are employed upon these, & not only upon the mere data, names, dates, statistics, & the like, which are but pegs to hang ideas on.

Our notion that liberty implies range, the <sup>power</sup> ~~range~~ of going hither & thither, far & near, is right in itself; <sup>but</sup> only Liberty is of the Spirit, <sup>A</sup> mind at large, with the whole resources of a kingdom in itself, is the endowment which Education is able to confer; & <sup>schooling</sup> ~~education~~ which fails to give the sort of liberty proper to a freeman fails in its purpose. Just thinking & right action are the accredited outcome of education; & I suppose we are all appalled by the wrong-headedness & ignorant wilfulness which make the world just now a stage for the antics of the Lord of Misrule. //

It is time that we who profess to educate shook ourselves & took our task seriously, ~~some~~ <sup>perhaps</sup> for ~~I suppose that~~ most of what is amiss is our fault; if we had not failed in our office things would have been otherwise! if we ~~refuse to~~ <sup>allow</sup> ~~as~~ <sup>so much,</sup> <sup>has been</sup> <sup>for</sup> What is the good of education if we refuse to allow this?

Half measures will not do; a revolution is ~~and~~ called for, & I think I shall be able to lay before you some of the principles & methods of such a revolution. *[Signature]*

All is plain sailing once we recognise that liberty is of the spirit more than of the flesh; that a man's freedom is to be measured by the compass of those avenues of thought in ~~the~~ which he is free to range, & in which he goes with elation of mind. The boy ~~at first~~ who has the pass-key ~~into~~ to history, poetry, art, mathematics, the felicities of language, biology, is free because his feet are set in a ~~large~~ large room.

In order to give liberty through education, certain barriers must be removed, <sup>rather</sup> ~~rather~~ intellectual than physical, chiefly an unworthy way of regarding boys & girls & an inadequate ~~the~~ notion of the office of education.

It is no easy matter to give its proper sustenance to the mind; hard things are said of children, that they have "no brains," "a low order of intelligence," and so on; but many of us are able to vouch for the fine intelligence shewn by children who are fed with the proper mind-stuff; people generally do not take the trouble to find out what this is nor how it must be served-up; and so we come dangerously near what Plato condemns as, "that lie in the soul," that corruption of the highest truth, of which Protagoras is guilty in the saying that, "Knowledge is sensation." What else are we saying when we run after educational methods which are purely sensory? Knowledge is not sensation, nor is it to be derived through sensation; we feed upon the thoughts of other minds; and thought applied to thought generates thought and we become more thoughtful. No one need invite us to reason, compare, imagine; the mind, like the body digests its proper food, and it must have the labour of digestion or it ceases to function.

"Education," said Lord Haldane a while ago, "is a matter of the spirit," - no wiser word has been said on the subject & yet we persist in applying education from without as a bodily activity or emollient.

Well, We begin to see light; no one knoweth the things of a man but the spirit of a man which is in him; therefore, there is no education but self-education & as soon as a young child begins his education he does so as a student. Our business is to give him mind-stuff, & both quality & quantity are essential. Naturally, each of us possesses this mind-stuff only in limited measure, but we know where to procure it; for the best thought the world possesses is stored in books; we must open books to children, the best books; our own concern is, abundant provision & orderly serving. //

I am jealous for the children; every modern educational movement tends to belittle them intellectually; & none more so than a late ingenious attempt to feed normal children with the pap-meat which may (9) be good for the mentally sick: but, ~~that~~ -- "To all wildly popular things, <sup>as Mr B. Shaw</sup> comes suddenly & inexorably death, without hope of resurrection." <sup>is dangerous</sup> If Mr Bernard Shaw is right, I need not discuss the popular form of "New Education."

These & other considerations urge upon me a rather distasteful task. It is time I showed my hand & gave some account of work, the principles & practices of which should, I think, be of general use. Like those lepers who feasted at the gates of a famished city, I



begin to take shame to myself! I have attempted to unfold (in various volumes) a system of

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educational theory resting upon a physiological basis which seems to me able to meet any rational demand, even that severest criterion set up by Plato; it is able to "run the gauntlet of objections, and is ready to disprove them, not by appeals to opinion, but to absolute truth." Some of it is new, much of it is old. Like the quality of mercy, it is not strained; certainly it is twice blessed, it blesses him that gives and him that takes, and a sort of radiance of look distinguishes both scholar and teacher engaged in this manner of education; but there are no startling results to challenge attention.

Professor Bompas Smith remarked a little while since in that inaugural address at the Manchester University to which I have already referred, that,—“If we can guide our practice by the light of a comprehensive theory we shall widen our experience by attempting tasks which would not otherwise have occurred to us.” I think it is possible to offer the light of such a comprehensive theory, and the result is precisely what the Professor indicates,—a large number of teachers attempt tasks which would not otherwise have occurred to them.

One discovers a thing because it is there, and no sane person takes credit to himself for such discovery. On the contrary, he recognizes with King Arthur,—“These jewels, whereupon I chanced divinely, are for public use.” For many years I have had access to a sort of Aladdin's cave which I long to throw open “for public use.”

Let me try to indicate some of the advantages of the theory I venture to press upon your notice. It fits all ages, even the seven ages of man! It satisfies brilliant children and discovers intelligence in the dull. It secures attention, interest, concentration, without effort on the part of teacher or taught.

Children, I think, all children, so taught express themselves in forcible and fluent English and use a copious vocabulary. Most children, spell well. An unusual degree of nervous stability is attained; also, intellectual occupation seems to make for chastity in thought and life. Parents become interested in the schoolroom work, and find their children “delightful companions.” Children shew delight in books (other than story books), and a genuine love of knowledge. Teachers are relieved from much of the labour of corrections. Children taught according to this method do exceptionally well at any school. It is unnecessary to stimulate these young scholars, by marks, prizes, honours lists, etc

this / I am anxious to bring quite successful educational  
experiment before the public at a moment when the Lord  
Chancellor declares that "Education must be . . . an appeal  
to the spirit if it is to be made interesting," a sentiment in which  
he is supported by the Primate, and, I am sure, by public  
opinion. Here is Education which is as interesting, fascinating,  
as a fine art, to parents, children and teachers.

During the last twenty years thousands of children educated  
on these lines have grown up in love with knowledge and  
manifesting "a right judgment in all things" so far as a  
pretty wide curriculum gives them data. Children are at work  
in hundreds of home schoolrooms, in some forty girls' schools,  
boys' preparatory schools, and in classes; they are taught by  
about three hundred Ambleside-trained teachers and some  
hundreds of untrained teachers; the trained teachers have  
studied the principles and practices of this method for two  
years in a residential training College; the untrained teachers  
do good and conscientious work, but only in so far as they know  
the principles which underlie the work do they succeed in  
turning out scholars who have become more of persons by  
means of their studies. It has been objected that this work  
is confined to the children of the well-to-do and educated  
classes, a fact which is supposed to account for its success.  
But it will be allowed that the average home-taught child does  
not distinguish himself when he goes to school; these children,  
however, are remarked upon for their power of attention and  
the wide range of their knowledge. I say "knowledge"  
advisedly, bearing in mind a point I have tried to make else-  
where,—namely, that information does not become knowledge  
until it has been acted upon by the mind of the recipient. ~~It~~  
~~is of necessity and not of choice that our efforts are confined~~

Children are students, each engaged with his own  
copy of the book in use, the teacher reading with  
his class as a college tutor reads with men.

Reading! Reading! Why this emphasis on reading in an age  
when, "Things are in the saddle, and ride mankind?" Because  
it is just here that much educational work fails; there are a  
few girls or boys of fine intelligence in every school; these  
read, both during school life and afterwards; but nine-tenths  
of the scholars in most schools enter on adult life without  
having formed the reading habit. I would have children  
taught to read before they learn the mechanical art of reading;  
and they learn delightfully; they give perfect attention to a  
paragraph or a page which is read to them, and are able to  
relate the matter point by point, in their own words; but they  
demand classical English and cannot learn to read in this sense  
upon anything less. They begin their "schooling" in  
"letters" at six, and begin at the same time to learn the  
mechanical arts of reading and writing. A child does not lose  
by spending a couple of years in acquiring these because he  
is meanwhile "reading" the Bible, history, geography, tales,  
with close attention and a remarkable power of reproduction,  
or rather, of translation into his own language; he is acquiring  
a copious vocabulary, and the habit of consecutive speech. In  
a word, he is an educated child from the first, and his power of  
dealing with books, with several books in the course of a  
morning's "school," increases with his age.

The whole point is to give children books that are books, that is, books whose existence is justified by originality in thought, & by a more or less literary style. // Books in which the matter is watered down, ~~compressed~~ or simplified, we abstain from carefully, because children are lovers of intellectual strong meat. This is curiously illustrated in the practice of narrating, or relating, paragraphs or chapters which have been read, which is as you know, a custom of the school; we test the value of the books set by the children's narrations; books which are marked by the concentrated thought & easy style which distinguish literature produce narrations full of matter & expressed in good vigorous English, while the most well-intentioned work of the talky-talky order results in a sentence or two of ill-expressed twaddle. //

Has it ~~\*\*\*~~ occurred to you how much this practice of narrating ~~\*\*\*~~ after a single reading implies? Try a chapter of Scott or of Jane Austen, read though once & then silently narrated, to put oneself to sleep in periods of insomnia, for example; I think few persons will be satisfied with the result. We find we have left out incidents, telling arguments, bits of description, - have failed to get the general hang of the narrative, & so on. Now, children <sup>get this hang</sup> ~~do~~ this admirably. They read with concentrated attention; the ~~single~~ single reading of a long passage puts mere parrot-like repetition out of the question; they use their own words & affect their author's style; & the fact that they read the works of many authors lends



to their general composition an ease & vigour & a fulness of matter which we elders may well envy.

it/ "I thought *The Idylls of the King* much too old for them, but I find they delight in ~~the book~~, is the remark of ~~more than one~~ mother; but we elders are not by any means so superior to the children as we think in matters of intellectual comprehension. They do not know much, to be sure, but they can understand anything that is put to them with directness and force. Too many details fatigue their minds, while they take to general principles, duly illustrated, with avidity. And, indeed, they have need to do so for there is much for them to learn, and they have no time to waste upon twaddle, or upon text-books crammed with the mere dust of learning. eda/

Recognizing that knowledge-hunger is as keen in children as is bread-and-butter hunger, we spread their table with a liberal hand, endeavouring to introduce them to each sort of knowledge that a rational human being should possess, the knowledge of God through the Bible, the knowledge of men through history, literature, ethics and art, the knowledge of the natural world through nature-study and science: and the response ~~the~~ children make to this liberal curriculum is delightful and stimulating. But, show an ordinary schoolmaster or mistress a single term's programme in either of the classes, and you will be told that it is much better for the children to do some three or four subjects *well* than to run over so much ground; that matter got out of books is mere information, and at that, information derived from so many books must be of a scrappy character. There are, no doubt, schoolmasters and mistresses who have considered the nature of knowledge and who understand children's enormous appetite for it. These hold, with Dr. Arnold, who says: "Adjust your proposed amount of reading to your time and inclination; but whether that amount be large or small let it be varied in its kind, and widely varied. If I have a confident opinion on any one point connected with the improvement of the human mind, it is on this." It is satisfactory to have chanced on a justification, in the words of so eminent an authority, of the principle that has guided the construction of the *any*

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from its first issue to its ~~sixty-third~~ *Eighty*; but there is a reason in the nature of things and in the nature of their own minds

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why children should deal with wide and various knowledge grouped under the three headings I have indicated. The knowledge of God is, we know, eternal life, and there is one final source of such knowledge, the Bible itself. Therefore we endeavour to make children familiar with many of the books of the Scriptures and with the words of the text itself. I do not press the point, that this familiarity with Bible English should give them some mastery of English at its best, though it does so, no doubt; we know how Ruskin's noble style was, as he himself admits, largely derived from this well of English undefiled. But the training in the speaking and writing of English which the Bible affords is incidental; what we look for is a steadily widening and increasing knowledge of God, brought to a point, as it were, by a knowledge of our noble liturgy. *etc.*

The knowledge of man includes a good many headings in our programmes: English History, French History, European History, Literature (both poetry and prose), Morals, Citizenship, *Plutarch's Lives*, Art Studies, studies in Music and in Language, Modern Languages and Latin. These and kindred subjects should issue in the just judgment, wide comprehension, strong sense of duty and responsibility, ~~and~~ devoted patriotism, the need of which is urged upon us by every national distress. Sympathy, tenderness, cultivated perceptions, a passionate sense of the beauty and duty of service, are among the equipments for life required in these exacting days; and all of these we aim at imparting by slow degrees, by more and more, through the words of the wise, which the children learn to delight in.

*Not must we see*

We are hardly aware how children lap up lessons of life like a thirsty dog at a water trough, because they know without being told that their chief business is to learn how to think and how to live; comment and explanation are usually distracting. By the way, I think there is one point about which we elders must be careful; it is easy to make children intolerable little pigs by giving a personal bearing to their work. It is bad enough to hear a mother say: "All the mothers care about in a school is that they shall be well looked after: it's the fathers who want some sort of education for the boys so that they can go into business; but I've told these

A child is in a bad case who suspects that to read about Alcibiades  
 king Alfred, Sir Calahad, should be to his advantage. The first  
 thing that this School is designed to teach is a love of knowledge  
 for its own sake, & this I think the children get; they learn that  
 last accomplishment of noble minds, to delight in books for themsel-  
 selves; but any hint that a poem or a personage is administered  
 to a child by way of pill or poultice, to do him good, is fatal to  
 the slow, still operation of knowledge upon his personality. //

Another point worthy of attention is that the effect of knowledge is  
 not evidenced by what a person knows ~~the~~ the store ~~of~~ of acquirements  
 he possesses, but only & solely by what a person ~~has~~ is. We have  
 all been surprised from time to time by the unusual simplicity of  
 some eminent man, & we give misplaced admiration to his modesty &  
 reticence; now reticence is not a great & frank quality. The fact  
 is that the man of profound knowledge behaves as he feels; he has  
 no store laid away in secret places: his knowledge has made him what  
 he is & has been to some extent consumed in the process.

"With all thy getting, get understanding," ~~we are~~ bidden. "Why will  
 ye not understand?" is our Lord's repeated demand of the Jews &  
 of ourselves. Now, a child or a man who reads a book in such a  
 way that his active mind appropriates the thought of the writer &  
 can express it ~~that~~ faithfully in his own words, has obtained know-  
 ledge, not a store to add \_\_\_\_\_



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to his resources in talk or for examination purposes, but aliment which increases the vigour of his personality. But surely, says someone, a child will get what he wants better from the lips of a teacher who knows how to explain and to approach him on his own level than from the pages of a book written for his elders! Here is one of the fallacies that we as a School exist to combat. For his intellectual diet, the child wants more meat, stronger meat, meat more various in quality, than any teacher can afford, and he is unfairly dealt with if he is not from the first brought into touch with great minds through their own written words.

First hand knowledge is what a child wants if he is to grow thereby; that is why oral lessons and lectures compiled from many books have a stimulating but not a sustaining effect. Now and then, no doubt, we hear a lecture from a man of original mind which is the working out of his own original thought; and such a lecture stands on the same level as an original book. But can we secure for our children the offices of a score of such lecturers, all of them working day by day on the subject each has most at heart? Even if we could, the distracting influence of personality would come between the pupil and the genius who is teaching him at the moment, and the result would tend to be stimulation rather than knowledge.

We can answer our imaginary critic at every point. It is better for a child to work at many subjects than at few, because children have an inherent need of knowledge on many subjects, and to acquire it is delightful to them. The brain is as much invigorated by regular, happy, various, work as is the physical frame; and the child who learns many things learns each of them as well as he who learns a few things learns those few, but the former has the added element of delight in his work. Only one caution is necessary,—a strict limitation in regard to hours of work. No young scholar should know what brain fag means; and every school timetable should be framed so as to secure ample leisure for the scholar and fitting work at fitting periods.

I think we have disposed of the notion that books afford only information while the so-called "lovely lesson" imparts knowledge. The third adverse criticism which we used to

4th of the hand of the student

by varied food

hear now & then, that information from many books must be of a scrappy character needs no further confutation than may be had from the examination papers. The questions are by no means easy to answer & are really test questions covering about one-twentieth of the ground prepared. You will find no "howlers", no use of words the meaning of which is not understood, no verbiage employed to cover ignorance. The children write with curious freshness; their work is in fact the work of original minds because their own apprehension has been employed throughout.

Imagination has been active in every case, scenes are described with a vigour which testifies to their having been visualised by the young writer, & personages are introduced in such wise that it is evident the children know them & will be rejoiced to meet them again in many an after allusion & study throughout life. The free flow of vigorous & direct English, the quite admirable style of most of the children's answers is very noticeable. We can all write well when we are full of our subject & know it well, & therefore, children in this School require no lessons in composition. In the course of time the children read through quite big books, getting a thorough & deeply interesting knowledge as far as it goes of the subject they are dealing with.

This brings me to the question of ~~books~~ the books used in the school; the selection of which is a long, difficult, & never-ending task. It is ~~curious~~ a curious thing to say, when there are hundreds of text-books on each of the subjects of study taken up in the school, that there would seem to be but the one right book, & that is long to seek; but the difficulty of finding the right book is an experience common to all students. ~~We in England have inherited a curious parsimony in the matter of books.~~

~~Being by nature a conservative people, I suppose this particular meanness has remained with us since the days when manuscript books were too costly for the schoolboys' use; & that is why as Ascham tells us, the boy had to learn at second-hand, from the lips of his master, what he should have got direct from the M.S. of the author.~~

Scholars who have grown up in this School, from Class Ia to Class IV, & have kept their books, find themselves in possession of a delightful library which is also a history of their intellectual life.

The books they used as children of six & seven, being of a literary character, are still interesting to them when they are grown up. ~~They~~ They know their way about many books treating of many subjects; ~~then~~ there are, as we know, two kinds of memory, one for facts, one for the place, page, line of the right book which elucidates the fact; the latter is the practically useful memory, & this, these young scholars should possess. The stimulating influence of this young scholar's



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library, these 'hundred best books', let us say, which have been intellectually grasped between the ages of six & eighteen, can hardly fail to affect the atmosphere of the whole household as well as that of the schoolroom party.

programme of work. Each child should have his own books because the practice of looking on is bad for the eyes and because the sense of property in his books, and of the duty and responsibility of taking care of them, is no small part of his education. As for the cost, we are told of a saying of Mahomet's, how that if a man had twopence (or the equivalent of twopence) he should spend one penny on bread and the other on flowers. Let us apply the same principle to books.

To speak for a moment of another matter; the parent who goes to his boy's schoolmaster and says, "I don't want my boy to learn geography (or, say, Greek, or drawing), because he is rather exceptional," is set down by the schoolmaster as a faddist. The latter may make a polite reply but is apt to murmur, *sotto voce*, "that is my business now." And he is right. It is the teacher's business to survey the wide range of subjects some knowledge of each of which is due to a child, and consider how they may be best proportioned and included. What the parent cannot undertake to do as a whole, he may not do in part; that is a way of speaking to "the man at the wheel," which is not without risk.

The parents of delicate children are often afraid of too much mental strain and consider that when a child has nothing to do his brain is keeping holiday. Never was a greater mistake.

"The human (brain) is like a millstone, turning ever round and round. If it have nothing else to grind, it must itself be ground."

And the poor little chap who is sent into the garden to play is really working furiously all the time. It is desultory, unorganized work which fatigues both body and brain, while the rhythmic regularity of prescribed effort is wonderfully easeful. Dostoevsky, in describing convict life in Siberia, supposed not to be strong enough for mental work. The brain, be it remembered, is a physical organ, and regular and sufficient exercise is one of the conditions which keep it in health. Brain Specialists are coming pretty unanimously to this conclusion, that all children are the better for definite

mental work, while such work is a necessity for those of retarded mental development.

Another bogey occasionally lifts its head,—that a child's intellectual labour and resultant fatigue are in proportion to the number of subjects studied. *Punch*, of course, knows about it. We all know that "Miss Honeyman's" Thesis for the D. Sc. degree, with its remarkable series of curves showing in Milligrammes the precise amount of fatigue endured by 5,875 children (male and female) varying in age from 6:329 to 7:215 years, in committing to memory the complete poem of "Mary and the Lamb," bade fair to revolutionize the whole science of Experimental Psychology. "But As a matter of fact, a number of subjects and a variety of subjects, make for relief and refreshment and not for fatigue; the things that tire a child are too long lessons and too long school-hours. By recognizing this fact we are able to get in much more work than the ordinary time-table allows of, because our lessons are shorter, and the children concentrate attention on what they are about. It is the constant effort to pull together

#### WITS THAT ARE WOOLGATHERING.

that fatigues child and man, and not rapid work done with full interest and attention.

While speaking on the difficulties that occur here and there in the working of the school, let me say a word to console parents who may be a little troubled because their children on entering the school are launched into the middle of certain books. Of course the same thing must happen in any school which they join because in a school children must work with their class. Now, very few subjects have either beginning or end, so it does not much matter where children come in so long as they alight on their feet; and, as the cycle of work goes round in the class they will want to use those parts of their books which they have missed. Anyway they have their books to refer to, and so are better off than children who depend upon oral lessons. The practice of beginning at the beginning and trying to overtake the class in the several books is much to be deprecated, and means the sort of overpressure which is fatal, not only to progress, but to that love of knowledge for its own sake which is the best thing to be got out of school life.

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20

as Punch  
say 1/1

4c

X If a child is to go on with his education all his life

509 CHILDREN'S GATHERING AT WINCHESTER.

in school

he must begin to work for himself in the way of getting knowledge, of dealing with his own books. The teacher it is true has important functions, chief among them, to see that the children *know* and, next, to show quiet sympathy in their interest in the delightful things they learn. Interest, concentration, if not universal, are very general among scholars who get enough to do, not only with their hands but especially with their brains. There is no occasion for the teacher to resort to "Miss Honeyman's" Dramatic Method as expounded in *Punch*. The interest is *there* in the knowledge itself, but the teacher must share this interest actively or her pupils become lethargic. ~~Now~~, although it is delightful, it is not an easy thing to keep up the alertness of mind necessary to accompany even one class through a morning's work. ~~This~~

~~and not to know, they do pass and they don't know!~~ I wish we all realized what an enormous thing, what a joyous factor in our lives is this delight in knowledge, in knowledge and in the books from which chiefly we derive knowledge. Once parents understood

etc THAT MARK-HUNGER AND KNOWLEDGE-HUNGER

cannot co-exist, public opinion would be brought to bear upon school methods and we should have boys and girls working, not towards the pass which is to finish their school career, but in that education which is to continue all their lives, as in their school-days, and whose reward is continuous intellectual activity and increasing joy in thinking and knowing, that is to say, a fuller and more satisfying life. This, for the individual; and, for the service of the world, many a larger, sweeter personality, because people are effective only in the ratio of their personality. ~~I venture to hope that England will be the~~



In urging a method of self-education for children in lieu of the vicarious education which prevails, I should like to dwell on the enormous relief to teachers, a self-sacrificing and greatly overburdened class; the difference is just that between driving a horse that is light, and a horse heavy, in hand; the former covers the ground of his own gay will and the driver goes merrily. The teacher who allows his scholars the freedom of the city of books is at liberty to be their guide, philosopher and friend, and is no longer the mere instrument of forcible intellectual feeding; *and this is true liberty in education for both teacher & pupil.*

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22

"A highly practical spirit is founded on abstract knowledge," we are told, and we who are practical, if anything, are rapidly finding ourselves outdone by a nation which puts knowledge first and takes practical aptitude as a consequence of abstract knowledge, that is, knowledge of Divinity, and the Humanities, (science and art, literature, history, ethics, etc.); ~~We covet~~ *& it is this*

*let me say again*

*manner of knowledge which makes for Liberty in Education.*

*We covet*

earnestly the best gifts, not that we may excel or equal any other people, but because:—

"We would indeed be somewhat as Thou art,  
Not spring, and bud, and flower, and fade, and fall—  
Not fix our intellects on some scant part  
Of Nature,—but enjoy or feel it all;  
We would assert the privilege of a soul,  
In that it knows, to understand the Whole.  
If such things are within us—God is good—  
And flight is destined for the callow wing,—  
And the high appetite implies the food,—  
And souls must reach the level whence they spring!  
O LIFE of very LIFE! set free our Powers,  
Hasten the travail of the yearning hours."

*Houghton.*



The Teachers' notes  
letter 25.2.1914

in 4 p10m042

I do not know any more encouraging sign of the times than the increasing uneasiness of Teachers. They are doing the greatest work in the world & are bringing to it patience, knowledge, enthusiasm & love. The results are very pleasing but yet teachers are not satisfied, partly, because these results are not enduring, & partly, because, brought into touch with the beautiful responsiveness of children, teachers feel that more might be made of them & that the world should grow visibly better for the labours of the noble army of teachers who are doing its work.

Just now this uneasiness is accentuated because schools are under high pressure to become vocational rather than educational. Not that the matter is ever put in this bald way; on the contrary, people say, 'Train the muscles, give ordered exercise to the senses; this is the work for little children. Then, with faculties alert, when they are older, they will be able to learn at school the employment by which they are to live. <sup>By the time they learn school to practice</sup> They will have learned <sup>ahead</sup> their vocation & society will be relieved of the burden of the inefficient & incapable.

This is vocational training, an easy & pleasant

path, a gradual descent, <sup>very</sup> tempting to teachers, because it offers rewards & praise & lightly won success.

The children like it, the teachers enjoy it, educational authorities are greatly interested, why in the world should teachers ~~not~~ be satisfied? Here indeed is a broad way with every inducement to follow it. <sup>Now,</sup> This system of vocational training

is, in all good faith, called education, although 'away with books', 'eschew spiritual (or intellectual) <sup>effort</sup> learn to do, <sup>things & not words,</sup> ~~live to execute~~, are the watchwords of the movement. <sup>this school says</sup> The

notion is that children learn by doing & that therefore vocational training is the same thing as education. <sup>we must remember, however, that</sup> All that children learn by doing is to do the thing they are at work upon. All the thoughts they get in doing are concerned with the carpentering or cooking they have in hand. They get the training proper to a beaver or an ant, not that they ever learn to work as perfectly! - while the glorious possibilities <sup>potential</sup> ~~proper to a man~~ are hindered & choked <sup>down</sup> as undeveloped buds in the child, to find unlawful outlets, if any, in the days to <sup>never</sup> come.

Now this is the sort of thing children think about & talk about. A class of small persons, aged nine or ten were reading Shakespeare's King John. One child whispers



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to another,-- But Constance was a very great lady, you should read her part with more swank!" Or, again, a small boy of six means to have an exhibition of his pictures & draws up a catalogue. This is the description of 'a gaint in red',-- "This giant is inside out! He lives mostly on onions & parrots & the black specks you see in the picture are the coats & ~~had~~ hats of all the people he has eaten". A little girl had been reading about Mary Queen of scots. Next day she brought some heather & laid <sup>it by</sup> ~~them~~ <sup>on</sup> the portrait of the Queen: ~~in her~~ book. "And Queen Mary said,-- 'Thank you very much; I have been waiting for that for years'."

But every teacher has a stock of stories which show how children ruminat<sup>e</sup> & imagine & to kill all that, strikes a thoughtful <sup>teacher person</sup> as a sort of smothering ~~xxx~~ of the Princes in the Tower!

The fact is, children require knowledge just as they require food; & ~~for all that science has to say~~ absolutely necessary as the teaching of science, it is still true that <sup>the</sup> proper knowledge <sup>for</sup> mankind is man, <sup>to</sup> be got out of history, poetry, tales, & travels, <sup>books</sup> so written that they are literature. Sinbad the Sailor, Waverley, Robinson Crusoe, & may I add, the history of Joseph & the travels of S. Paul, & the Gospel narratives (whose wonderful beauty we lose sight of because their vital importance is

so great). Give children such books, <sup>and with</sup> as these with little teaching, <sup>living its history hands,</sup> beyond the inspiring sympathy & direction of an educated mind, & they grow, spiritually, become persons of wise & understanding hearts, with many intellectual resources. *They are educated for their own uses rather*

*I not merely*  
*than for Army Society.*  
*No advantage*  
On the other hand, the persons who cry out for vocational training, <sup>was easy</sup> that boys & girls should leave school able to go on with useful work in the world, have truth on their side. The fact is that the school has two functions, -educational & vocational, & neither supercedes nor overlaps the other. The due & daily nourishing of the mind & the opening up of many interests belongs to the former, while the equally due & necessary training of hand & eye, senses & muscles (even to the point of preparatory work in a given <sup>calling</sup> vocation) belong to the latter. <sup>It</sup> A good many teachers, here & there, are beginning to look to the Parents' Union for help in adjusting these contrary claims, & I think we are <sup>some</sup> able to offer ~~them~~ the help they need. That which is usually called my method, (~~which is~~ little more than the right use of the right books), enables children to learn with such facility & delight that they get through more than double <sup>the</sup> usual work in a given time, & retain that which they have learned. <sup>For this reason</sup> ~~In this way~~ it is possible to divide the school day into



two equal parts, the morning for educational, the afternoon for vocational work. Children take to both with avidity & teachers are relieved of the distress that comes of a neglected duty, an <sup>unfulfilled</sup> unanswered demand.

The Philosophy of Education by which our practice <sup>has been</sup> ~~is~~ directed for the last quarter of a century or more is comprehensive, taking in all the powers & proclivities of human nature & all the practices of sound education. But perhaps the two outstanding principles are, - that education is of the spirit not of the flesh, (a principle lately enunciated with great effect by Lord Haldane); & next, that learning, not teaching, is the business of the ~~school~~ schools. This principle of self-activity (not self-expression), in ~~our~~ intellectual & spiritual life has received the name of Activism from Eucken, the Great German Philosopher, whose principles, only lately come to our knowledge, tally <sup>curiously</sup> ~~so~~ well with our own. <sup>Believe that</sup> Knowledge is life <sup>But</sup> & the knowledge of God is eternal life.

Professor Eucken omits the subject of Education from his Survey of Philosophy, & I think we are in a position to supply this omission. Let teachers believe that Knowledge is the Life.

Concern of education, not knowledge is up. I do not know of any one who is a school teacher. Education will advance by large planning. Knowledge is not the end of education. It is a means to the end of education. Knowledge is not the end of education. It is a means to the end of education. Knowledge is not the end of education. It is a means to the end of education.



To the Editor of The Times

A GREAT EDUCATION\*

'But we really are a great people', said Mr Bonar Law in the House of Commons after November 11th, & you, Sir, at any rate are insistently bent on a great education for this great people. The creed of the survival of the fittest has been tried upon a tremendous scale & ~~has been~~ found wanting & we may not try in education a doctrine that has failed in arms & government. It is by no means easy to get away from offering the best to the best in education & an educational aristocracy appears to be inevitable. The task before us is to find an absolutely democratic education, a great education, which shall meet all sorts & conditions of people & be accepted by them; for that is the real difficulty; it is not that the authorities will not give but that average boys & girls will not take such an education as is worth while, that humanistic education which thoughtful people uphold. We all feel the need of a discovery which shall act as a lever to raise the general mind & we are aware that there is such a lever if we could find it. We have proved ourselves a great people on the field, great in spiritual power. Why should not this same spiritual

power show in our schools, not among the fittest only, but among all our children & young people?

May I repeat what I have been allowed to say in your columns before that this need of the age has been forestalled by a discovery made, as are all great natural discoveries, by a person of no particular distinction. Things are discovered because they are there, for anyone to find out & this particular find is no less than an enormous aptitude, or what Coleridge would call appetency, for knowledge, in children & young people of every class & age.

In this new light we are able to face the problem of Continuation Schools with courage & definite purpose; & for our better guidance, let us consider a little what has been done in the past towards the education of the adolescent. After the Napoleonic wars, as we know, a great & promising effort to deal with the Ignorance which was felt to be more injurious than even a score of years of desolating war. The Tugendbund in middle Europe brought forward the humanities as a means of healing & help. In England we had suffered less than others & offered vocational education to our young people. But whether the States or the peoples were in fault, these educational efforts died down &



we hear of nothing further being done till the beginning of the nineteenth century. When Kirchensteiner wrote that famous pamphlet on which the Munich system was founded it is not too much to say that <sup>it found its origin in</sup> envy of British success in <sup>m</sup>commerce & manufactures gave rise to that technical education the principle of which was expressed by <sup>a</sup>Bavarian statesman when he said, 'if you would have the ~~earliest~~ fruits you must sow the seed, the fruit, that is, of industrial success. Kirchensteiner's pamphlet created a great sensation in England & America as well as in ~~Europe~~ middle Europe & led in Germany & elsewhere to the establishment of ~~compulsory~~ compulsory Continuation schools, with what effect upon general conduct & character we have had ample means of judging, <sup>even</sup> not that any form of technical school can have a positive ill effect, but they sinned by defect & this is a point worth thinking about because amongst ourselves there are still people who believe that handicrafts are a means of bettering conduct & character.

While middle Europe was working for the manufacturer with a ~~pois~~ pious hope that the children also would benefit, the northern countries were at work on other lines with a quite different end in view. Grundvig, whose name



should be better known as an inspired educator, conceived the idea of the Peoples' High Schools, where young men & women should learn history, ~~literature, ~~poetry~~, ~~scripture~~, ~~history~~, ~~poetry~~~~, world history & national history, literature, northern Sagas & modern history, Scripture <sup>history</sup>, folklore, poetry & national ballads, in fact, the humanities as they might be presented to such scholars. Denmark being an agricultural country, young men & women flocked to spend the four or five winter months at one or other of these schools where they might get a great education at the lips of the enthusiastic teachers whom Grundvig knew how to inspire. But 'all is not for all' was his word with the <sup>no</sup> collary that books are not for the people. How indeed could young people with poor vocabulary & no literary background approach literature except at second hand, diluted & impoverished, even from the lips of an enthusiastic teacher who knew his subject well? All the same Grundvig's great hope fulfilled itself. A new class of readers sprang up all over the land, a circumstance of which I had a curious proof in an out-of-the-way village of Sweden. There was one little general shop in the village which sold everything, bread & bacon, cabbages & string, & across the small-paned window was a shelf of slim volumes in paper covers. The Swedish books were Greek to me but there were translations from French German & English & among

*Carl*  
the English books were volumes of Thackeray<sup>e a</sup>, Ruskin, Dickens,  
& other writers including of course Marie Corelli!

Few but peasants lived in this country village & it was good  
to think that the family readings, neighbourly readings &  
endless pleasant talk which those slender volumes, which had not  
had time to get dusty, suggested to the envious stranger.  
The Danish butter we all used to know is only one example of  
the excellence of the work turned out by intelligent &  
cultivated people.

Thus would we have it in Britain only more  
so. We would take our young people straight to the fountain  
head for a great education. The best books & many books  
should be our sources not the diluted twaddle or the  
pedantic periods of the lecturer, however highly qualified &  
enthusiastic. It will be argued that herein is the difficulty,  
the uneducated ~~man~~ mind is inaccessible to literature. What  
can the young person, who is stumped by the turn of every  
phrase, ~~can~~ who can make ~~nothing of the~~ nothing of the most  
obvious allusion, do with great books? The teacher may  
present something in the way of an easy paraphrase but that  
is the utmost to be hoped. This is the general & rational



opinion that the humanities are supposed to be accessible  
 only to the classes by means of a somewhat academic treatment;  
 which has accomplished something for secondary education but it  
 is quite incompetent for the task before us; 'the enlightenment  
 of the masses'. This hour of our necessity comes to us  
 with an amazing discovery. Children take to literature all writi  
 writing of a literary character as ducks to the water; attempts at  
 Elucidation & explanation bore them stiff; so do questions &  
 illustrations. They want to know, they read to know, & after  
 a single reading they do know, whether it be a scene from Shakes-  
 pere, an episode from Plutarch, if the child be old enough,  
 one of Bacon's Essays. Children, any children, can tell you  
 the whole thing after a single reading. The master of a very  
 poor school in ~~the slums of~~ a slum of a large town tells how a  
 boy listened to the reading of the Seven Ages of Man & after  
 that single hearing said the whole. The master remarked that  
 he had an unusual memory but perhaps the fact was that he  
 listened so intently as to be able to visualise the whole.



This brings me to a point I wish to make . No doubt, much desultory reading of good books is done in our schools but our plea is for knowledge, which has for the mind the sustaining power that food has for the body; & perhaps knowledge is not received without some such deliberate act of knowing as takes place in close attention to a passage & verbal or written reproduction after one reading . Knowledge received in this way is, we find, reproduced with accuracy & originality months later. We hear, again, of charming little essays & verses produced by children . This, too, is delightful & is very much a matter of course when children's minds are at work; but to give out is not the same thing as to take in. The latter process implies growth; the former, some loss. Realising these few points, & that every school working on these principles is a Giocosa, <sup>our</sup> way is clear. The young people of the new schools are eager to know . We must eschew the beggarly elements of the past & give them vital knowledge in a literary form & plenty of it, securing that they do know all that they read.

We know that this can be done. ~~It has been done~~

It is being done in thousands of cases (we ceased to count after the first 10,000) in Council schools scattered over the country, & done with extraordinary delight. May I plead that it is an ~~easy~~ easier thing to go on with a syllabus, always fresh, always progressive, about which the young people <sup>scholars</sup> are eager & keenly desirous of going on, than to start an untried scheme of doubtful value. The cost of adopting & working this syllabus is absolutely nil. The books cost a good deal but young wage-earners will no doubt be encouraged to buy their own books & so form the nucleus of a little library of books in which they can turn to favourite passages. How various is the knowledge that the young students deal with is illustrated by the following list of names beginning with from the examination paper of a girl of thirteen who uses upwards of 200 proper names with great ease & interest,

Science & art , literature , above all , history , ethics , civics , are included besides the usual school subjects . Some one may say that the object of the Continuation School is , not to produce persons of a sound mind & many interest but of technical skill , ready to the hand of the manufacturer . Now the more there is of a person the more value is his work & most employers would prefer intelligent boys & girls with the habit of close attention & exact execution , boys & girls with principles of conduct & wholesome interests to the ready-made ~~technical~~ product of the technical school . Employers do not desire to give with one hand & take back with the other . These eight hours a week are their free gift to their young employees . Otherwise the Bill would not have been carried even though we have a great ~~Head~~ of the Education department , & we may take it that the wish of the country is for the intellectual & moral development of its children .

Indeed , though our ignorance is deplorable , though we have not the stability of an educated nation , we are preeminent in manufacturing & commercial skill & have no leeway to make up . We are faced with two rather overwhelming possibilities , - the vast range of knowledge to which every child



is entitled & the vast power of every child to deal with this  
knowledge